

Copy of

Father's letter on the death of Gerrit Smith.

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Boston, Dec. 28, 1874.

Dear Mrs. Smith:

A telegram from the office of the New York Independent, just received this evening, conveys to me the startling and afflicting intelligence of the death of your widely honored and greatly beloved husband; startling, because no particulars are given, and I had not heard that he was ill; and afflicting, because, notwithstanding that he had reached almost an octogenarian period, his faculties were so clear, his mind so vigorous, and his interest in the welfare of the country (now greatly imperilled by an alarming reaction unfavorable to the cause of equal rights) so vital and active, that his loss to the nation and the world is indeed a very serious one. But the mandate is unescapable - "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" - yet it must be for good,

and not for evil, because provided by Divine Wisdom and Love. It must be a heavy blow to you and your dear children, this removal from your sight of one of the best of husbands, one of the most affectionate of fathers. I proffer you and them the throbbing sympathy of a deeply affected heart; to which my dear wife and children add their own. But if there is cause for sorrow, there is also cause for joy and thanksgiving, in view of a life so long protracted, so consecrated to the relief of every form of suffering humanity, so resplendent in virtue, so inexhaustible in the service of a world-embracing philanthropy, so courageous in its assertion of unpopular truths, so grandly in accordance with the Golden Rule, so deeply imbued with love to God and love to man. Surely, he was ripe for his translation.

It was only a few days since that I completed my seventieth year. By a striking coincidence, it was ~~deeply~~ strongly impressed

upon me, to-day, to sit down and write a letter to my dear and venerable friend Gerrit Smith, informing him of the event, accompanied by my warmest wishes for his health and happiness, and giving him a New Year's greeting a little in advance. But I am too late; "the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl broken."

I shall wait with painful solicitude to learn the particulars of his decease. Doubtless it was sudden, yet, I trust, without suffering. Better so than the result of a long and wasting illness.

It would be a melancholy satisfaction to me to attend the funeral, and bear testimony to his extraordinary worth; but I am confined to my house by a rheumatic affection which greatly cripples me in the matter of walking, and prevents my travelling any distance. Besides, any eulogy from any lips, on such an occasion, would be only attempting to "gild refined gold"

and add a perfume to the violet."

With the warmest esteem and the
closest sympathy in this trying hour, I
remain,

Yours in sorrow as in joy,
Wm Lloyd Garrison.

P.S. No answer to this is desired, be-
cause you will doubtless receive many letters
of condolence, and ought to be spared the
task of answering any of them, except in the
case of relatives.